November 26, 2020

To the Graduate Program:

This project, entitled “Workshop to Help Families Provide Support to Els during Remote Learning due to Covid-19” and written by Jose Giovanni Ortiz Covelli, is presented to the Graduate Program of Greensboro College. I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts with a Major in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.

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Michelle Plaisance, Advisor

We have reviewed this
Project and recommend its
acceptance

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Chair, Department of English

Accepted for the Graduate Program

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Jane C. Girardi

WORKSHOP TO HELP FAMILIES PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ELS DURING REMOTE LEARNING DUE TO COVID-19

Presented to

The Graduated Program of

Greensboro College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

By

Jose Giovanni Ortiz Covelli

November 2020

Advisor: Dr. Michelle Plaisance

Abstract

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, most public schools resorted to remote learning increasing the challenges faced by English learners. This paper is intended to provide families with a workshop that helps them learn about the possible ways they can provide support to the English learners at home during remote learning. The workshop includes the topic of providing teach-support at home which focuses on the plethora of possibilities learners may use technology for learning purposes. It also emphasizes the importance of parent-teacher contact to promote students' success while learning online. Similarly, the workshop highlights the critical role of parents during the unprecedented times of remote learning in education and the importance of their involvement in the learners' educational process. Likewise, families are encouraged to create a school environment at home which promotes a nurturing environment that will prepare learners to transition back to schools re-open their buildings for the educational community. Finally, this paper encourages families to work together with school staff in order to pursue the success of English learners' goals and make remote learning relevant for the student's education instead of a missed opportunity for helping students get to the next level of online education.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my wife and my family for all their support and encouragement during this process.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of my Greensboro College professors who have played a key role in my academic growth, specially Dr. Michelle Plaisance for her constant support and positiveness in the completion of this achievement.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Learning English was one of my main goals in life. I am aware that I am constantly learning something new from this language. Moreover, after having the experience of living and working in an English-speaking country, I understand and appreciate the value of learning the language at an early age. Along that everlasting process of language acquisition, several people played important roles that helped me succeed. These people include teachers for their valuable instruction and support and classmates for their helpful interaction, but above all, my family played the most important role, since it was at home that I learned about the importance of learning new abilities, especially communicating in a foreign language, for my future.

Although my context was different, English language learners have many things in common. Those features shared include teachers who provide valuable language instruction, classmates who engage in meaningful interactions in the target language making no difference if they are learning face to face or remotely, and families who support them in many ways (e.g., older siblings who understand the language better or parents who guide them in studying strategies at home). Those are ideal external factors for learning English, but in the county I work at there are English language learners who probably have good instructional time from their teachers, interact in the target language with their classmates, but lack the support at home that would complement the learning of any skill. On top of this challenge, the world has changed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted a plethora of challenges for all students, including English language learners. Schools across the United States have started the 2020/2021 school year with partial or full remote learning. At first glance, the obvious challenge most students and teachers would face is adapting to the confusion of online learning. But, for language learners it might go beyond that point. In the article *Virtual schooling poses extra challenges for English-language learners*, Fernandes (2020) stated that many English language learners did not receive adequate language services to achieve proficiency during the spring semester in the 2019/2020 school year. That situation adds up to the challenges faced by high school English learners who are required to support their households economically; therefore, exploring options and delaying adult responsibilities are not always an option (Sánchez, Esparza, Colon, & Davis, 2010, as cited by Hanks-Sloan, 2016). Hanks-Sloan (2016) argued that parents of English learners are not involved directly in their children's education but provide the essential school materials.

The issue of having too many long-term English language learners is not new in public schools. One of the concerns of ESL teachers across the county I work at is the fact that remote learning due to Covid-19 might lower the opportunities of English learners to exit the ESL program. Regardless of the fact that most school districts have provided students with remote learning tools (e.g., laptops, Internet hotspots across the county, and specific subject materials depending on the subject), it is important for counties to provide extra support to English learners since their language needs require more attention. Echevarria, Frey, and Fisher (2015) explained that it is essential for English learners to be exposed to language instruction for a certain period of time daily to gain proficiency in the target language.

In order to alleviate the impact of the challenges, apprehension and uncertainty underlying remote learning in English language learners, I developed a workshop for English language learners' families that will give them an insight of the different challenges their children normally face in school, and the new challenges present during remote learning. This workshop is important not only for English language learners' families, but also for school administrators who are committed to providing quality schooling services to all children in the county. The workshop will have a main section for all grade levels including elementary students, middle school students, and high school students.

My personal interest in developing this workshop is to provide the ESL department of the county in which I teach with a tool that can be shared with families face to face or remotely, with newcomers, active English language learners, long-term English language learners, and even learners who have exited the ESL services and are being supervised. This workshop may be established as part of the plethora of services offered by the ESL department which are used during induction meetings with parents of newcomers when they are first contacted by the school district. It can also be used during beginning-of-the-year meetings as well as end-of-quarter meetings, middle-of-the-year meetings and end-of-the-year meetings which are carried out every school year in person or via video conference. I believe when the workshop is presented to families their level of awareness will rise and they will have a broader perspective of all the ways they would be able to support their children, navigate the uncharted waters of schooling, and learn a language in the times of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews scholarship related to the different strategies for families to provide support to English language learners while they are at home during remote learning. The support given by families at home will result in helping English learners in their process of exiting the ESL program. Rubin, Sutterby & Abrego (2013) argued that despite different limitations, English language learners' families care deeply about their children's education and are willing to assist them as much as they can.

Mitchell (2020) asserted that English learners, especially those from families where English is not the main language, cannot contact teachers and classmates who help improve language understanding during remote learning. Furthermore, Fernandes (2020) stated that many English language learners did not receive adequate language services to achieve proficiency during the spring semester in the 2019/2020 school year. According to Mitchell (2020) English learners were one of the student groups that were most severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic; therefore, counties across the country considered English learners along with students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) to be the first group of students to go back to the school buildings progressively. Due to the lack of support that English learners may receive from schools, families play a key role not only during remote learning but also during regular school instruction. This is why it is imperative to engage English learners' families who are usually less engaged in school than families of native English speakers (Rubin et al., 2013). It is also essential to take into consideration the fact that, as stated by Kim (2013), because of the need to master scientific content and subject language at the same time, English learners must face more challenges in the process of

learning English. They must acquire the academic knowledge, literacy and language skills necessary for being successful in the content areas.

Tech-Support at Home

Weyers (1999, as cited in Kim, 2013) suggested that technology makes it possible to access learning materials more effectively. It can also bring natural and rich background language and cultural materials to learners. Internet and authentic video allow learners to access factual text and opinions in the target language. For any student, literacy at school is not an easy task, especially during remote learning. As a result, the use of technology during remote learning becomes essential for English learners. Byrne (2009) believed that learning through technology-supported teaching is learner-centered and context-based. Therefore, students are able to be immersed in learning on their own, making the remote supervision of teachers and at-home supervision of students' families a needed asset for the successfully completion of English learners' learning goals. Gustad (2014) pointed out that the use of technology in the teaching of reading concepts can greatly improve students' motivation to learn, making technology a valuable strength for remote learning. Crum (2017) considered that English language learners need the assistance of technology in regards of modeling concepts taught, providing examples of information presented, and affording a mechanism for exploration and research in order to reach the goal of content comprehension and learning success.

Families are able to help students fully exploit technology during remote learning. In addition to the support provided by the school districts, families could assist specially

those students who are not in constant contact with technology or who have not used technology as a learning tool and that support would partly impact the success of remote learning (Jargon, 2020a). Also, families may take advantage of the opportunities private internet service companies are providing in light of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Those opportunities include not disconnecting the service of families who cannot afford to pay for it, offering specials plans for families who do not count with internet service at all, and providing students and the public in general with Wi-Fi hotspots in different areas of the cities (Diaz, 2020).

Students' e-learning circles. Students are prone to understand technology much better than adults and families need to use that advantage to support students during remote learning. Zayapragassarazan (2020) explained that the e-learning circle is a team of distance learners. These teams are inherently highly interactive and participatory. They use online media to have a deeper understanding of areas of common interest.

Skills practice. During remote learning it is problematic for English learners to practice their language skills. With the use of technology during remote learning, Zayapragassarazan (2020) suggested finding relevant 'Podcasts', which are digital audio files for listening practice. Families can also encourage learners to read texts of their interest in trustworthy websites in order to maintain contact with the target language.

Setting timers. Jargon (2020b) urged families to help students by setting timers. According to Jargon (2020b), the use of timer apps or setting a timer on the phone would not only help students be ready for their classes, but also remind them it is time to log off and rest from being in front of the screen for a long period of time.

Dual screens. Another important piece of advice from Jargon (2020b) is that families should help students set up dual screens if they are able to provide them. In that case, English learners would be having their virtual video meeting in one device and working on their assignments on the second device.

Central calendar. In households where there are more than one English learner or households where most family members are busy and are not able to assist the student at any time, Jargon (2020b) suggested parents to maintain a central calendar which includes all the links for all the student's virtual meetings, so they can easily access their classes.

Getting to know your child's school's LMS. It is important for families to be acquainted with all the resources provided by the schools in order to support English learners and also native students. Gilhooly (2001) defined LMS, or Learning Management System, as a computer system platform that delivers content previously input by teachers. LMSs regulate registration and administration of the courses. They also generate reports and track students' progress. School districts generally offer families training on how to navigate LMSs and family members can also look for online tutorials in different languages about this topic. Watson & Sunnie (2007) stated that LMSs are designed to meet all learners' needs, which should be considered a key component of the education process by English learners' families.

Teacher- Parent Contact

Remote learning had never been so widely used in public education and the collaborative work between teachers and parents is essential to English learners' success.

Cherng (2016) asserted that teacher-parent communication is one of the key components in educational success of students, especially those who belong to racial or ethnic minorities, or who are immigrants. The importance of teacher-parent communication has become an indispensable part of school participation as pointed out by Jiang et al. (2012) while suggesting that effective family and school communication is essential for establishing a common goal, avoiding misunderstandings between parents and teachers, and guiding parents to participate in activities at home. When teacher-parent communication is well-structured, it "can impart information to help parents become more knowledgeable about children's learning activities, aware of their positive qualities and progress, and informed about how they, as parents, might help their child learn" (Ames et al.,1993, p.3, as cited in Jiang et al. 2012).

Parent Involvement

Remote learning poses challenges for all the members of the educational community of which families are a key pillar. In these regards, families are expected to go the extra mile with their children studying at home so that remote learning is more effective in the 2020 fall semester than the 2020 spring semester (Jargon, 2020a). Parent supervision is essential but must not become a situation where families are the ones doing all the schoolwork for their child. It is necessary for families to find a balance in 'help but don't help' as mentioned in ¨Remote Learning Tips for High School and College Students or Parents or Teachers¨ (2020). Since school buildings are closed for students, they may feel as if it is vacation time, but high involvement in the educational success of English learners

requires parents to enforce bedtime routines, limit the digital distraction sources (e.g. video games, social media, or television) or other nature of time management (Vera et al., 2012).

Garcia (2011) noted that Hispanic parent involvement is known to be difficult to achieve because most of the times these parents work long hours, travel long distances to work and have limited English language skills to communicate with schools. Despite those hindrances, Hispanic parents try to find the best way for them to communicate with schools by calling a teacher who speaks Spanish, or they send older siblings to attend discipline conferences or other meetings that require more elaborate language interactions (Hanks-Sloan, 2016).

Homework is considered to be an important portion of school life, not only for students, but also for parents since it is while doing homework when the home and school interact most closely (Moroni et al., 2015). But parent involvement goes beyond sitting down with the learners and assisting them with their assignments. Moroni et al. (2015) explained that when parent get involved in their child's education, they are able to convey their values, beliefs and academic expectations for their children, which is something that has to be utilized by teachers during remote learning to understand parents expectations and make sure parents understand teachers' expectations as well.

Creating the School Culture at Home

All levels of education are navigating uncharted waters during remote learning and public education in the United States is not excluded. Creating the school culture at home is particularly important to settle the bases of a successful school year.

Desk for Studying. Behrendt (1992) explained that it is important for parents to create a school-like area at home with a desk set up for the student to get familiarized with the conditions of the school while reviewing topics of the previous school year or reading books selected by the parents or the child.

Bedtime Routines. Another important aspect of creating the school culture at home is to establish bedtime routines. Behrendt (1992) explained that parents need to model the bedtime routines in regard to time and follow them as strictly as possible. Although this idea of bedtime routines presented by Behrendt (1992) is within the context of ending the summer and being prepared for a new school year, it can be adapted to the remote learning environment due to the similarities of the contexts lived in these times. Families of English language learners are able to see the benefits of the relation between bedtime routines and school readiness.

School Readiness. School readiness is a concept that Duncan et al. (2007) defined as the skills a child needs to have before entering school which predict school achievement. School readiness is closely related to school health attitudes, and it has shown to have impacted beyond the first few years of school education. The impact is that children under five have a higher level of school readiness, usually achieve higher grades in school, and are less likely to drop out, which in the future has a positive effect in the adult life of students (Kitsaras et al., 2018). From these points of view, school readiness can be seen as a topic of interest for English learners' families to help their students develop during remote learning while waiting for school buildings to open back again.

Nutrition. Given the current conditions of education where students attend schools remotely from home, it is crucial that students maintain the school environment where they

eat breakfast early at home or before classes start at school, which results in better attendance, the ability to concentrate better, better problem-solving skills, and better muscle control (Nutrition Tips for School Success, 1998). During remote learning, school districts are providing meals to students every week with the help of private foundations to ensure that basic needs, including food, are provided throughout the COVID-19 crisis (Cummins Foundation Issues Grants to Community Partners Addressing Urgent Childcare, Nutrition and Remote Learning Needs Caused by COVID-19 Crisis, 2020).

Reach Out to School Counselors

School counselors are one of the best resources English learners of all grade levels have throughout their school life. School counselors' roles in school regarding English learners consists of providing help and support to improve their academic achievement and with high school students, increase the rate of college-ready students (Cook, 2010). English language learners' families have to reach out to school counselors who are available to assist during remote learning. School counselors are trying to make sure all students receive instruction and well-being. Families cannot perform the job of school counselors, but they are able to provide support to students in different ways. Isolation may worsen the fearful feelings of dealing with a global pandemic and families can help alleviate those feelings with a cheerful attitude which promotes mental and physical well-being (Anderson, 2020).

Schools and Families Working Together

Snelling and Fingal (2020) believed families can work closely with schools to understand their role during remote learning. One of the key aspects for a successful learning experience in a remote fashion at home is that students understand what is expected from them. Snelling and Fingal (2020) emphasized the importance of schools communicating clear expectations to families when planning for remote learning. Providing families with a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that explains how schools function during remote learning offers a way to ensure precise information is given to students, even at home. Snelling and Fingal (2020) assured that family members should be asked to ensure that their children know how to log in. They also need information on how to seek help. A step-by-step guide to access the curriculum and online tools can help provide this information and the use of various formats (such as video, text and screenshots) can improve the chances of all personnel involved in the teaching process to understand the way remote learning and the programs used for its proper use functions (Snelling & Fingal, 2020). Norris (2020) suggested that distance learning can benefit even the youngest learner. They may benefit from the interactions with classmates online, singing together, as well as seeing their own teachers who care about them and help them learn and grow. Teachers play an important role in delivering instruction, but to a large extent, teachers' success in distance learning with young children depends on the level of support of the family at home. Also, school districts across the country are implementing different strategies to support the most vulnerable groups of learners during remote learning by creating remote learning support centers, providing meals for students, and mental aid for those in need (Swanson, 2020**).**

The collaborative work between schools and families gains more importance during remote learning since teachers are expected to provide students asynchronous activities and families are expected to help learners develop those activities, especially the younger ones (Reich et al., 2020). This type of asynchronous work is projected to be assigned to all grade levels and younger students are expected to have a full-time caregiver at home who provide support while developing the activities. In the case of older students, middle school or high school students, they are expected to work on their own in their asynchronous work and in most cases are also expected to devote no more than two hours a day on it (Reich et al. 2020).

Make Time for your Child

Remote learning has proven difficult for everyone involved in education. Parents have to deal with remote learning in such a way that they have to balance their work life and their new roles of learning guides at home. Garbe et al. (2020) reported that parents find it difficult to balance employment, if they have not lost it, with the support they are expected to provide their children at home, sometimes having to choose one over the other. It is natural that families feel overwhelmed with the remote learning that their children are experiencing since the school closures were sudden and they were not prepared for the changes they have to face at work, either. Garbe et al. (2020) suggested that parents need the appropriate kind of support from schools as well as proper future training programs for them to accompany students navigate successfully the uncharted waters of remote learning.

Chapter Three: Project Design

In this chapter I explain the rationale for creating a workshop for families to support English learners during remote learning. This workshop benefits English learners, their families, and schools in ensuring different strategies of support for learners to be successful during remote learning.

The beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic encountered schools unprepared for such an unprecedented situation. As a result, many English language learners did not receive adequate services or instruction (Fernandes, 2020). The 2019-2020 school year finished abruptly in some districts or in an online fashion in others. That uncertainty left parents and students full of doubts regarding the immediate future of the schools and learners. During the summer of 2020, many school districts across the country decided to start the 2020-2021 school year in a fully remote manner, while some other districts opted for a blended plan which included face-to-face instruction and remote learning. In this context, it is imperative to note that English learners are part of a vulnerable group of students, including special education students and students with disabilities, who require constant support to meet their needs (Mitchell, 2020).

Fernandes (2020) highlighted the concern and frustration of parents who could not provide academic support to their English language learners at home during remote learning. Apart from the fact of being in the middle of a global pandemic and that many jobs have been lost, it is difficult for parents of English learners to ensure their children receive the needed assistance due in part because of language barriers, lack of technology

awareness, lack of communication with school staff, lack of time to assist children at home, or simply not knowing how to provide that support.

The final product of this project is a workshop that aims to help families provide support to English language learners during remote learning. This workshop includes a PowerPoint presentation in which one of the central topics included is technology support. Crum (2017) considered technology as an important tool to assist English learners in modeling concepts taught, providing examples of information presented, and affording a mechanism for exploration and research in order to reach the goal of content comprehension and learning success. The issue with technology at home is that families may not be acquainted with the use of technology in education or the use of technology at all. Even if families are knowledgeable of technology, this workshop provides significant guidelines to make the best of the technological resources found at home for remote learning. Through this workshop, families are instructed in helping learners set dual screens for better organization of online lessons, setting timers for schedules and time management, and getting to know the learner's Learning Management System (LMS) used by the school in order to take advantage of the resources provided by school districts. Regarding technology, English learners are also expected to learn how use online resources for practicing language skills and creating e-learning circles with other learners to promote interaction among peers.

The PowerPoint presentation that serves as a structure for the project also entails the support strategies of parent-teacher contact and parent involvement. Parent-teacher contact is essential in the educational success of students who belong to racial minorities or are immigrants (Cherng, 2016), especially during remote learning when students face a new

method of online instruction and are not accustomed to online expectations. This is the point where parent involvement becomes essential in remote learning. This workshop presents families with a plethora of ways parents enhance learning during remote instruction that will benefit learners. Despite the fact that parent involvement is historically more difficult for Hispanic parents because of the language barriers, long hours of work and commute to work (Garcia, 2011), families can still support English learners by creating a school culture at home that promotes success by establishing bedtime routines, setting a space for studying, helping students be school-ready, and providing adequate nutrition.

During this presentation I insist on the importance of schools and families working together for the success of all children, especially English language learners. The relentless communication between families and school counselors is key during remote learning to help fill those emotional gaps students may feel as a result of being quarantined at home and not being able to interact in the school building with their friends. Besides school counselors, families are urged to exploit all the resources provided by school districts such as training for families about remote learning, workshops, information meetings, wi-fi hotspots, and meals for students among others.

This workshop also includes a final activity for participants to ensure understanding of the topics presented. This final activity is a self-paced online assessment through Quizizz.com which will provide information about the effectiveness of the workshop. Because of the language barriers English learners' families may have, this workshop is available in English and Spanish to ensure the target audience participate in an active manner.

Chapter Four: Project

Remote learning has posed many challenges for everyone involved in education. English language learners are among those who have been impacted the most by remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic; hence their language acquisition process may be jeopardized if schools and families do not work jointly during these unique times. This workshop is supported by a PowerPoint presentation which features an English version (See Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation – English Version) as well as a version in Spanish (See Appendix B: PowerPoint Presentation – Spanish Version).

This workshop aims to help families identify different ways to support English language learners navigate remote learning at home. It is also intended to emphasize the importance of collaborative work between schools and families.

One of the concerns about remote learning in public schools is access to technology and training on how to use those technological tools at home. Similarly, the use of technology has become a great asset for English language learners because it provides them with assistance regarding modeling concepts taught, providing examples of information presented, and affording a mechanism for exploration and research in order to reach the goal of content comprehension and learning success (Crum, 2017). Figures 1 and 2 show families how to use technology and how to provide tech-support at home. These figures also feature 6 technology-related topics that shed light on aspects regarding the use of devices for language learning as well as other gadgets found in households to help students organize their time and learning space.

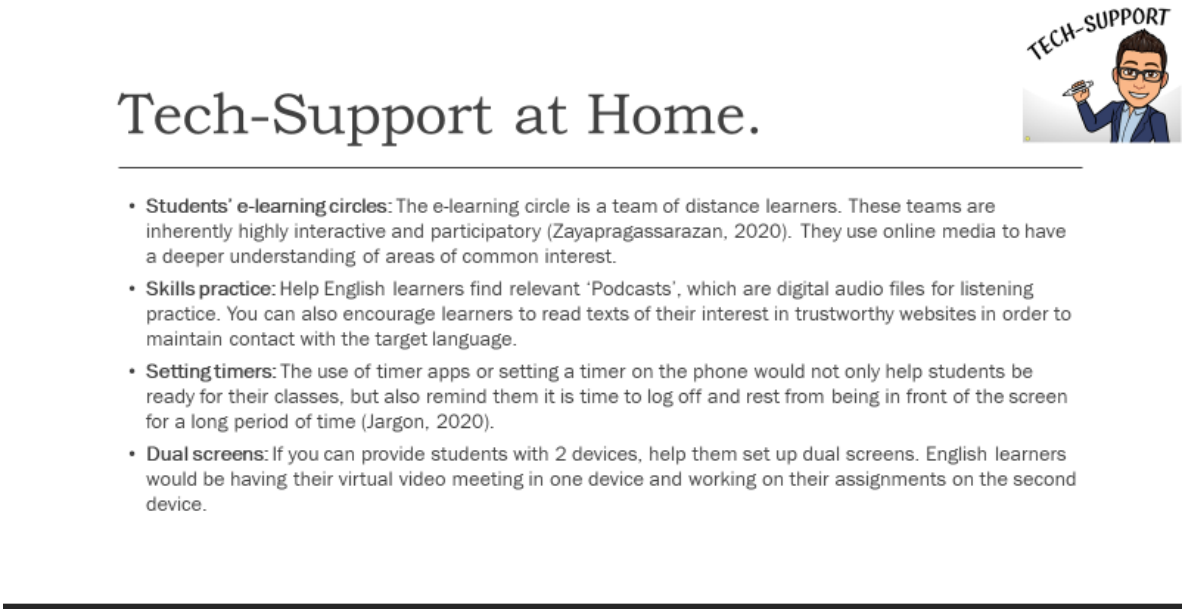


Figure 1. Slide 5. Tech-support at home (part 1).

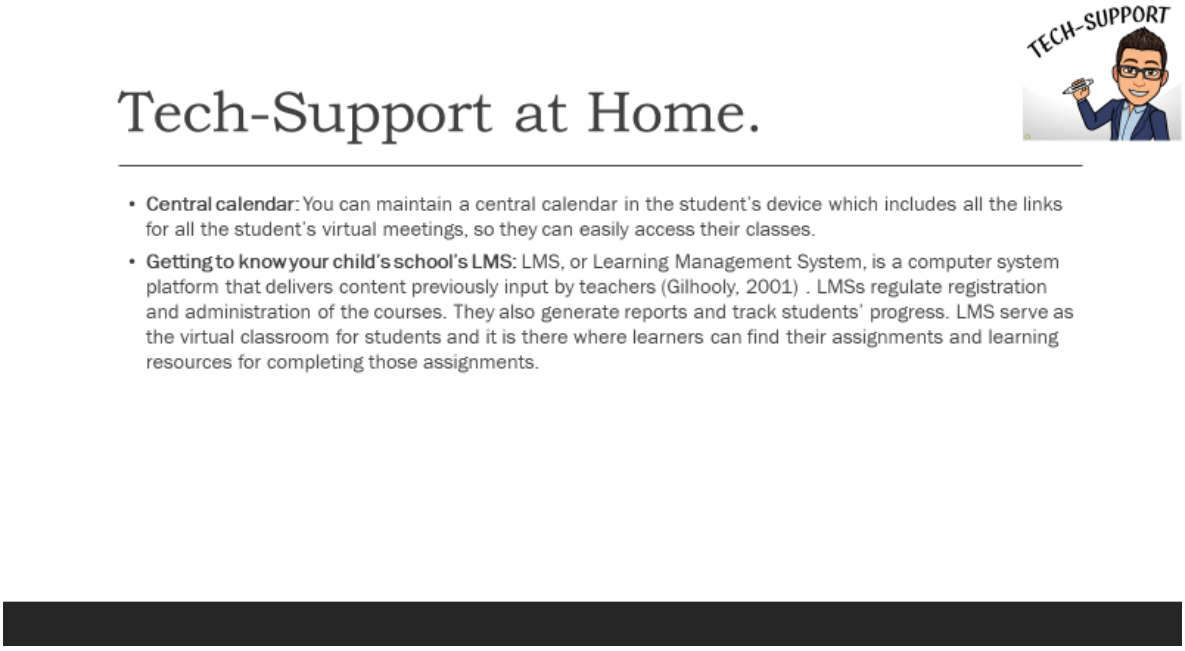


Figure 2. Slide 6. Tech-support at home (part 2).

Another topic discussed in this workshop is the importance of teacher-parent contact during remote learning due to COVID-19. Figure 3 shows slide 7 which presents families different reasons to be more in contact with teachers than usual. Remote learning has impacted not only students but also teachers and contact with families is key for students' success. Families are encouraged to contact the teachers to know about their child's learning activities, their positive qualities and progress, and be informed about how they might help their child learn (Ames et al.,1993, p.3, as cited in Jiang et al. 2012).

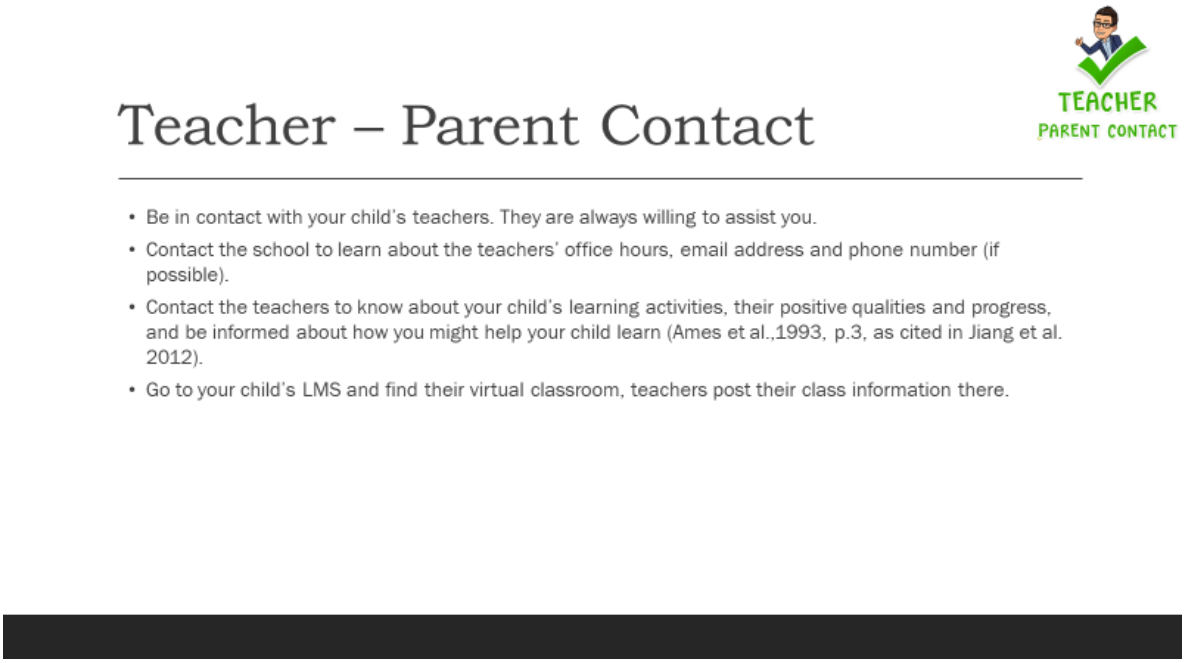


Figure 3. Slide 7. Teacher-parent contact.

Parent involvement is an important aspect for student's success in education and during remote learning it has become top priority. Families are expected to go the extra mile with their children studying at home so that remote learning is more effective in the 2020-2021 school year (Jargon, 2020a). Figure 4 shows different reasons for families to be involved in their children's education during remote learning.

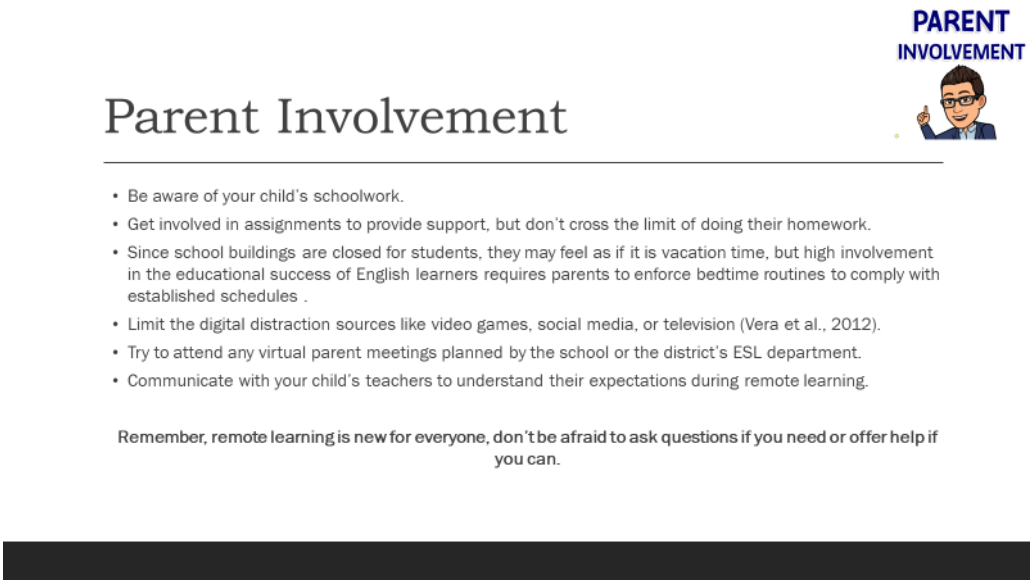


Figure 4. Slide 8. Parent involvement.

Given the fact that students spend their school time in their households, it is important for families to create the school culture at home so that when school buildings open back again, the transition of returning to classes is carried out in a smoother way following the precautions established by school districts. Figure 5 displays 4 topics families may work to create the culture at home.

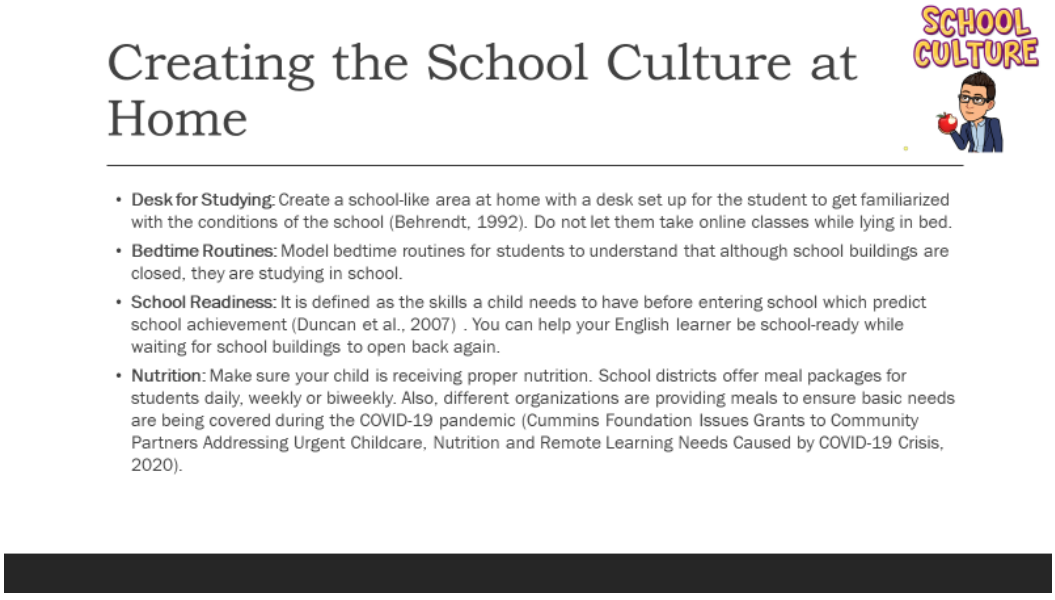


Figure 5. Slide 9. Creating the school culture at home.

School counselors play an important role in the educational process of all students and families of English language learners are encouraged to maintain frequent communication with them during remote learning. Figure 6 shows the importance of reaching out to school counselors because isolation may worsen the fearful feelings of dealing with a global pandemic and families might be instructed on how to help alleviate those feelings with a cheerful attitude which promotes mental and physical well-being (Anderson, 2020).

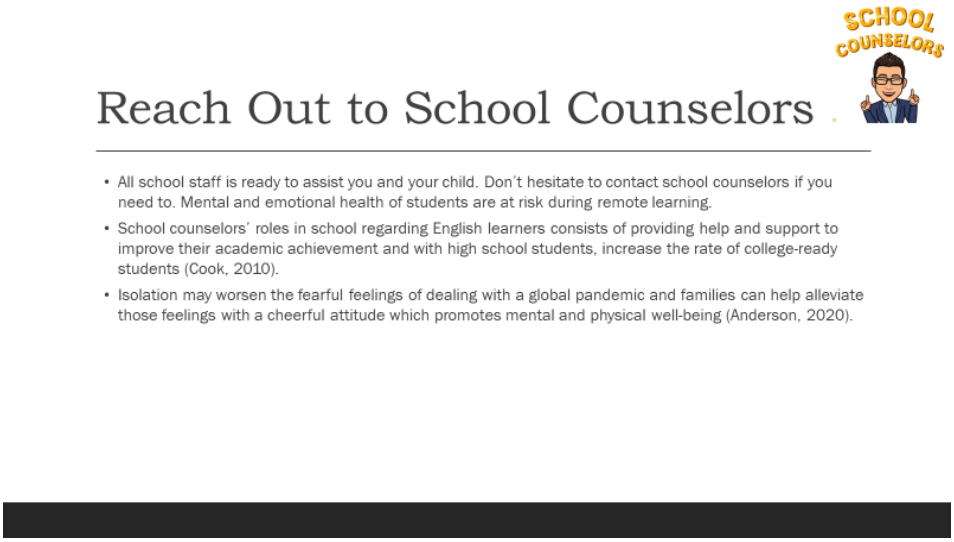


Figure 6. Slide 10. Reaching out to school counselors.

Communication between families and school staff has always been critical in bringing school community together to work towards students' success. During remote learning, communication still needs to be at the core of educational success of learners and families are expected to be more flexible and foster the collaborative work between schools and families. Figure 7 shows key reasons why schools and families should work together to pursue the achievement of students' goals.

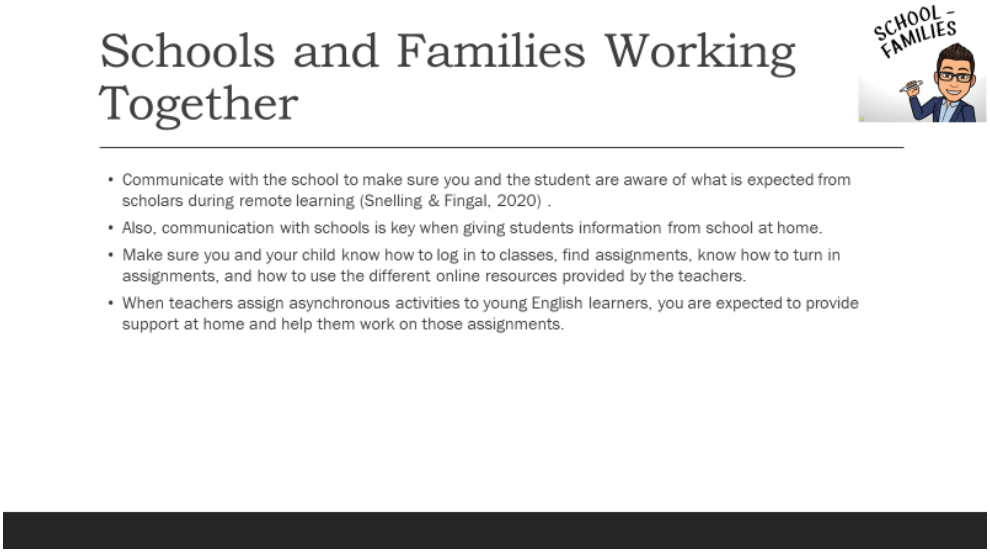


Figure 7. Slide 11. Schools and families working together.

The last informational slide of the PowerPoint presentation that supports this workshop is associated with the necessity of parents to be available for their children by balancing their working time with their family time. Figure 8 shows the importance of parents to make time for their children.

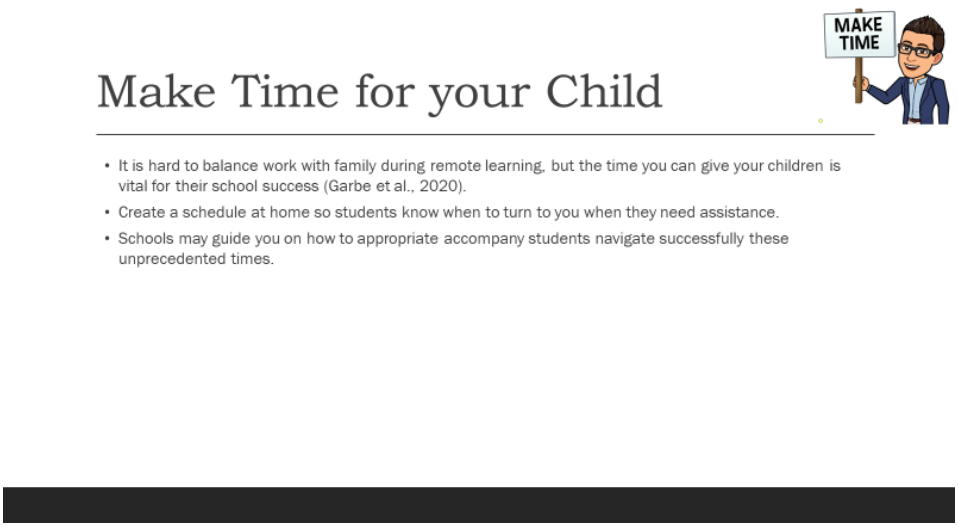


Figure 8. Slide 12. Make time for your child.

After the informational slides are presented, the workshop continues with a Quizizz game for participants to assess their knowledge about the information presented. This Quizizz game can be accessed via the link shared in slide 13 as shown in figure 9. The Quizizz game questions can be found in English (See Appendix C: Quizizz – English version) and in Spanish (See Appendix D: Quizizz – Spanish version).

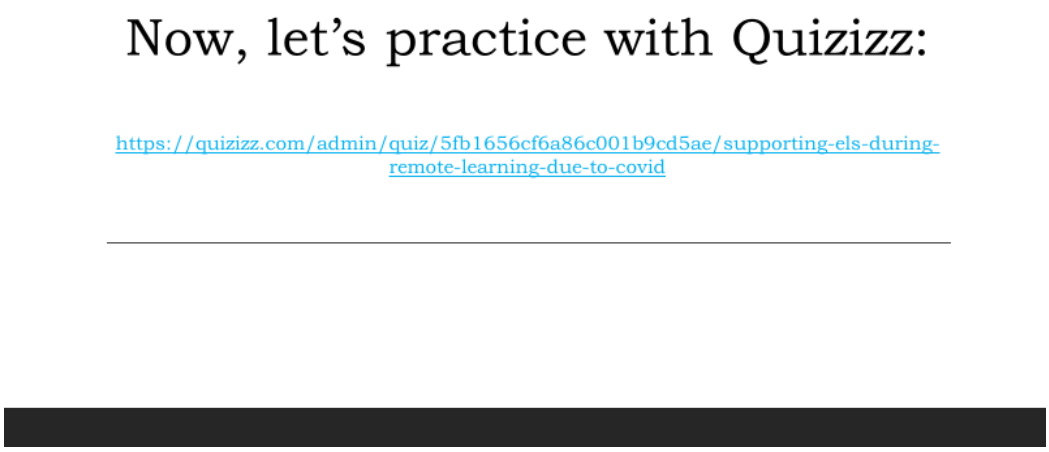


Figure 9. Slide 13. Quizizz assessment link.

The final part of the workshop consists of a section for answering any questions that participants may have.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, education has entered an uncertain terrain. First, school districts did not know how to proceed in order to finish the spring semester of the 2019-2020 school year. Then the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year saw school districts take different approaches regarding school openings. In all cases, students have been the center of all precautions and any step made has been considered from various perspectives to preserve public health, minimize the exposure to the virus and guarantee quality instruction for scholars.

Remote learning due to COVID-19 strongly suggests that school districts were not ready to face online instruction. English learners were part of different groups of students who were clearly at a disadvantage during remote learning since the accommodations and extra support were difficult to provide. The research for this project helped me understand that the school district where I work was not the only one that was struggling to ensure quality instruction for English learners. Another important experience I take from this research is that there is not a universal truth about the right approach to handle remote learning. There are different ways to face remote instruction and students' needs vary with context. What may work for one school district may not work for another.

I have also learned that technology in schools needs to evolve along with educational changes. Education is unlikely to be the same as it was before March of 2020 and technology has reclaimed its place even in places where top notch technology was only a dream. Likewise, the traditional relationship between schools and parents has taken a

turn. English language learners' families have been traditionally distant from schools because of work or language barriers among other reasons. This relationship led to poor parent involvement and limited parent-teacher contact. However, remote learning is starting to transform communication between English language learners' families and schools by making it more necessary and imperative. Teachers ae trying hard to do their part and families are acknowledging the need to do so.

I hope that this workshop I created reaches those English language learners' families who perhaps have not had any guidance on how to support their children from home. Similarly, it may be used by school districts through their ESL departments to make sure families, even the ones that only speak Spanish, are provided with enough tools to support English learners at home during remote learning and guarantee they are academically ready to go back to school when school buildings open. I also expect this workshop benefits the students who are at the core of this research project.

Further work is needed in the area of technology since it is an ever-changing field that requires constant updates and development. Many online platforms used during remote learning have been updating their products to meet the needs of schools, parents and students. I believe that inasmuch as remote learning continues, education will be learning new ways to find the appropriate guidelines for it to be successful. More research is also required in terms of how to best define the role of parents at home during remote learning since they need to know clear expectations from schools and simultaneously be flexible and strict with homework and routines.

It is important to highlight the fact that remote learning came to schools in an unexpected way, but it is here to stay. It is essential that all parties involved in education

take a learning position when facing the challenges presented by remote learning in public schools and understand that all decisions made have the ultimate goal of providing quality instruction and nurturing learners while we all learn to live with the new normal school life.

Appendices

Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation – English Version

WORKSHOP TO HELP FAMILIES

PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ELS DURING REMOTE LEARNING DUE TO COVID-19

CHAPTER 4: PROJECT

Slide #1

Table of Contents

- Introduction ..... Slide 4
- Tech-support at home ..... Slides 5 & 6
- Teacher –parent contact ..... Slide 7
- Parent involvement ..... Slide 8
- Creating the school culture at home ..... Slide 9
- Reach out to school counselors ..... Slide 10
- Schools and families working together ..... Slide 11
- Make time for your child ..... Slide 12
- Quizizz ..... Slide 13
- Questions and answers ..... Slide 14

Slide #2

Introduction

Remote learning has posed many challenges for everyone involved in education. English language learners are among those who have been impacted the most by remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This workshop will help you identify different ways to support English language learners navigate remote learning at home.

Slide #3

Tech-Support at Home.

- **Students' e-learning circles:** The e-learning circle is a team of distance learners. These teams are inherently highly interactive and participatory (Zayapragassarazan, 2020). They use online media to have a deeper understanding of areas of common interest.
- **Skills practice:** Help English learners find relevant 'Podcasts', which are digital audio files for listening practice. You can also encourage learners to read texts of their interest in trustworthy websites in order to maintain contact with the target language.
- **Setting timers:** The use of timer apps or setting a timer on the phone would not only help students be ready for their classes, but also remind them it is time to log off and rest from being in front of the screen for a long period of time (Jargon, 2020b).
- **Dual screens:** If you can provide students with 2 devices, help them set up dual screens. English learners would be having their virtual video meeting in one device and working on their assignments on the second device.

Slide #4

Tech-Support at Home.

- **Central calendar:** You can maintain a central calendar in the student's device which includes all the links for all the student's virtual meetings, so they can easily access their classes.
- **Getting to know your child's school's LMS:** LMS, or Learning Management System, is a computer system platform that delivers content previously input by teachers (Gilhooly, 2001) . LMSs regulate registration and administration of the courses. They also generate reports and track students' progress. LMS serve as the virtual classroom for students and it is there where learners can find their assignments and learning resources for completing those assignments.

Slide #5

Teacher – Parent Contact

- Be in contact with your child's teachers. They are always willing to assist you.
- Contact the school to learn about the teachers' office hours, email address and phone number (if possible).
- Contact the teachers to know about your child's learning activities, their positive qualities and progress, and be informed about how you might help your child learn (Ames et al.,1993, p.3, as cited in Jiang et al. 2012).
- Go to your child's LMS and find their virtual classroom, teachers post their class information there.

Slide #6

Parent Involvement

- Be aware of your child's schoolwork.
- Get involved in assignments to provide support, but don't cross the limit of doing their homework.
- Since school buildings are closed for students, they may feel as if it is vacation time, but high involvement in the educational success of English learners requires parents to enforce bedtime routines to comply with established schedules .
- Limit the digital distraction sources like video games, social media, or television (Vera et al., 2012).
- Try to attend any virtual parent meetings planned by the school or the district's ESL department.
- Communicate with your child's teachers to understand their expectations during remote learning.

Remember, remote learning is new for everyone, don't be afraid to ask questions if you need or offer help if you can.

Slide #7

Creating the School Culture at Home

- **Desk for Studying:** Create a school-like area at home with a desk set up for the student to get familiarized with the conditions of the school (Behrendt, 1992). Do not let them take online classes while lying in bed.
- **Bedtime Routines:** Model bedtime routines for students to understand that although school buildings are closed, they are studying in school.
- **School Readiness:** It is defined as the skills a child needs to have before entering school which predict school achievement (Duncan et al., 2007) . You can help your English learner be school-ready while waiting for school buildings to open back again.
- **Nutrition:** Make sure your child is receiving proper nutrition. School districts offer meal packages for students daily, weekly or biweekly. Also, different organizations are providing meals to ensure basic needs are being covered during the COVID-19 pandemic (Cummins Foundation Issues Grants to Community Partners Addressing Urgent Childcare, Nutrition and Remote Learning Needs Caused by COVID-19 Crisis, 2020).

Slide #8

Reach Out to School Counselors

- All school staff is ready to assist you and your child. Don't hesitate to contact school counselors if you need to. Mental and emotional health of students are at risk during remote learning.
- School counselors' roles in school regarding English learners consists of providing help and support to improve their academic achievement and with high school students, increase the rate of college-ready students (Cook, 2010).
- Isolation may worsen the fearful feelings of dealing with a global pandemic and families can help alleviate those feelings with a cheerful attitude which promotes mental and physical well-being (Anderson, 2020).

Slide #9

Schools and Families Working Together

- Communicate with the school to make sure you and the student are aware of what is expected from scholars during remote learning (Snelling & Fingal, 2020) .
- Also, communication with schools is key when giving students information from school at home.
- Make sure you and your child know how to log in to classes, find assignments, know how to turn in assignments, and how to use the different online resources provided by the teachers.
- When teachers assign asynchronous activities to young English learners, you are expected to provide support at home and help them work on those assignments.

Slide #10

Make Time for your Child

- It is hard to balance work with family during remote learning, but the time you can give your children is vital for their school success (Garbe et al., 2020).
- Create a schedule at home so students know when to turn to you when they need assistance.
- Schools may guide you on how to appropriate accompany students navigate successfully these unprecedented times.

Slide #11

Now, let's practice with Quizizz:

https://quizizz.com/admin/quiz/5fb1656cf6a86c001b9cd5ae/supporting-els-during-remote-learning-due-to-covid

Slide #12

Questions and Answers

Slide #13

Appendix B: PowerPoint Presentation – Spanish Version

TALLER PARA AYUDAR A LAS FAMILIAS A BRINDAR APOYO A LOS APRENDICES DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS DURANTE EL APRENDIZAJE REMOTO DEBIDO AL COVID-19

CAPÍTULO 4: PROYECTO

Slide #1

Tabla de Contenido

- Introducción ..... Diapositiva 18
- Soporte técnico en casa ..... Diapositivas 19 & 20
- Contacto entre padres y maestros..... Diapositiva 21
- Participación de los padres ..... Diapositiva 22
- Crear la cultura de la escuela en casa..... Diapositiva 23
- Comunicarse con los consejeros escolares..... Diapositiva 24
- Escuelas y familias trabajando de la mano..... Diapositiva 25
- Saque tiempo para sus hijos..... Diapositiva 26
- Quizizz..... Diapositiva 27
- Preguntas y respuestas..... Diapositiva 28

Slide #2

Introducción

El aprendizaje remote ha traido muchos retos para las personas involucradas en la educación. Los aprendices del idioma Inglés están entre aquellos a quienes más ha impactado el aprendizaje remote debido a la pandemia por COVID-19.

Este taller le ayudará a identificar diferentes formas para ayudar a los aprendices del idioma Inglés durante el aprendizaje remote en casa.

Slide #3

Soporte Técnico en Casa.

- **Círculos de aprendizaje en línea de estudiantes**: Los círculos de aprendizaje en línea de estudiantes son unos equipos aprendices en línea distantes. Estos equipos son altamente interactivos y participativos (Zayapragassarazan, 2020). Ellos usan herramientas en línea para tener un mejor entendimiento en áreas de interés común.
- **Práctica de habilidades**: Ayude a los aprendices del idioma Inglés a encontrar 'Podcasts' relevantes. Los 'Podcasts' son archivos de audio digitales para la práctica de la habilidad de escuchar. También puede motivar a los aprendices a leer textos de su interés en páginas de internet confiables para mantener el contacto con el idioma Inglés.
- **Configuración de temporizadores**: El uso de cronómetros o temporizadores en el teléfono móvil no solo ayudan a los estudiantes a estar listos para sus clases, sino que también les recuerda que es tiempo de salir de las plataformas en línea y descansar de estar frente a una pantalla por un tiempo prolongado (Jargon, 2020b).
- **Pantallas duales**: Si puede brindarle a su hijo o hija 2 aparatos electrónicos en los que se pueda conectar a internet, ayúdelos a configurar esas dos pantallas. Los aprendices del idioma Inglés tendrían su clase en línea por medio de video en una pantalla y podrían trabajar en las tareas asignadas en la otra.

Slide #4

Soporte Técnico en Casa.

- **Calendario central:** Usted puede configurar un calendario central en el aparato electrónico del estudiante que utiliza para conectarse a sus clases en línea, el cual incluye los vínculos de todas las clases virtuales para su fácil acceso.
- **Conozca el SMA de la escuela de su hijo o hija:** SMA, o Sistema de Manejo de Aprendizaje, es una plataforma de computación que presenta el contenido previamente puesto por los maestros (Gilhooly, 2001) . Los SMA regulan el registro de los estudiantes y la administración de sus cursos. También generan reportes y registran el progreso de los estudiantes. Los SMA sirven como el salón de clases virtual para los estudiantes y es allí donde los alumnos pueden encontrar sus tareas y los recursos de aprendizaje para completar esas tareas.

Slide #5

Contacto entre Padres y Maestros.

- Mantenga el contacto con los maestros de su hijo o hija. Ellos están siempre dispuestos a ayudarle.
- Contacte para saber acerca de los horarios de oficina de los maestros, sus correos electrónicos y números de teléfono si es posible.
- Contacte a los maestros para saber acerca de las actividades de aprendizaje de sus hijos, su progreso y cualidades positivas y para estar informado acerca de cómo los puede ayudar en su aprendizaje (Ames et al.,1993, p.3, as cited in Jiang et al. 2012).
- Visite el SMA de su hijo o hija y encuentre el salón de clases virtual, los maestros ponen la información de sus clases allí.

Slide #6

Participación de los Padres.

- Esté pendiente del trabajo escolar de su hijo o hija.
- Involúcrese en las tareas para brindar apoyo, pero no cruce la línea de hacer las tareas de sus hijos.
- Ya que las escuelas están cerradas, los estudiantes pueden sentir que es tiempo de vacaciones, pero una participación activa de los padres en el éxito del proceso educativo requiere que se establezcan rutinas de sueño y así cumplir con los horarios establecidos.
- Ponga límites a las distracciones digitales como video juegos, redes sociales o televisión (Vera et al., 2012).
- Trate de asistir a las reuniones virtuales para padres planeadas por la escuela o el departamento de Ingles como segunda lengua del distrito escolar.
- Comuníquese con los maestros de sus hijos para entender sus expectativas durante el aprendizaje remoto.

Recuerde, el aprendizaje remoto es nuevo para todos, no tenga miedo de preguntar algo si tiene dudas u ofrecer ayuda si lo puede hacer.

Slide #7

Crear la Cultura de la Escuela en Casa.

- **Escritorio para estudiar**: Cree un área parecida a la escuela en casa con un escritorio para que el estudiante se familiarice con las condiciones de la escuela (Behrendt, 1992). No permita que tomen clases en línea acostados en la cama.
- **Rutinas de sueño**: Modele las rutinas de sueño para que los estudiantes entiendan que aunque las escuelas están cerradas, ellos están estudiando desde casa.
- **Preparación para la escuela**: Se define como las habilidades que un estudiante necesita tener antes de entrar a la escuela y que predicen el éxito escolar (Duncan et al., 2007). Usted puede ayudar a su hijo aprendiz del idioma Inglés a estar preparado para la escuela cuando los edificios se abran de nuevo para los estudiantes.
- **Nutrición**: Asegúrese que su hijo o hija reciba una nutrición adecuada. Los distritos escolares ofrecen paquetes de comida para los alumnos diariamente, semanalmente o cada dos semanas. A su vez, diferentes organizaciones están brindando comida para asegurar que se cubran las necesidades básicas durante la pandemia debido al COVID-19 (Cummins Foundation Issues Grants to Community Partners Addressing Urgent Childcare, Nutrition and Remote Learning Needs Caused by COVID-19 Crisis, 2020).

Slide #8

Comunicarse con los consejeros escolares.

- Todos los miembros de las escuelas están dispuestos a ayudarles. NO dude en contactar a los consejeros escolares si lo necesita. La salud mental y emocional de los estudiantes está en riesgo durante el aprendizaje remoto.
- Los roles de los consejeros escolares con respecto a los aprendices del idioma Inglés consisten en proveer apoyo para mejorar su rendimiento académico e incrementar el número de estudiantes de secundaria listos para la Universidad (Cook, 2010).
- El aislamiento puede empeorar los sentimientos de miedo por lidiar con una pandemia global y las familias pueden aliviar esos sentimientos con actitudes de apoyo que promuevan el bienestar mental y físico (Anderson, 2020).

Slide #9

Escuelas y Familias Trabajando de la Mano.

- Comuníquese con la escuela para asegurarse que usted y sus hijos estén al tanto de las expectativas hacia los estudiantes durante el aprendizaje remoto (Snelling & Fingal, 2020).
- La comunicación con las escuelas es también clave a la hora de brindarle información de las escuelas a los estudiantes en casa.
- Asegúrese que usted y sus hijos saben como entrar a las clases en línea, encontrar las tareas, saber cómo entregar esas tareas y saber cómo usar los diferentes recursos en línea brindados por los maestros.
- Cuando los maestros asignen actividades asincrónicas a los estudiantes más jóvenes, se espera que ustedes brinden apoyo en casa para ayudarles con esas tareas.

Slide #10

Saque Tiempo para sus Hijos.

- Es difícil encontrar el balance entre trabajo y familia durante el aprendizaje remoto de nuestros hijos, pero el tiempo que les demos a ellos es vital para su éxito escolar (Garbe et al., 2020).
- Cree un horario en casa para que sus hijos sepan cuando recurrir a usted para pedirle ayuda cuando lo necesiten.
- Las escuelas los pueden guiar en cómo acompañar apropiadamente a los estudiantes durante estos tiempos sin precedente.

Slide #11

Ahora, vamos a practicar en Quizizz:

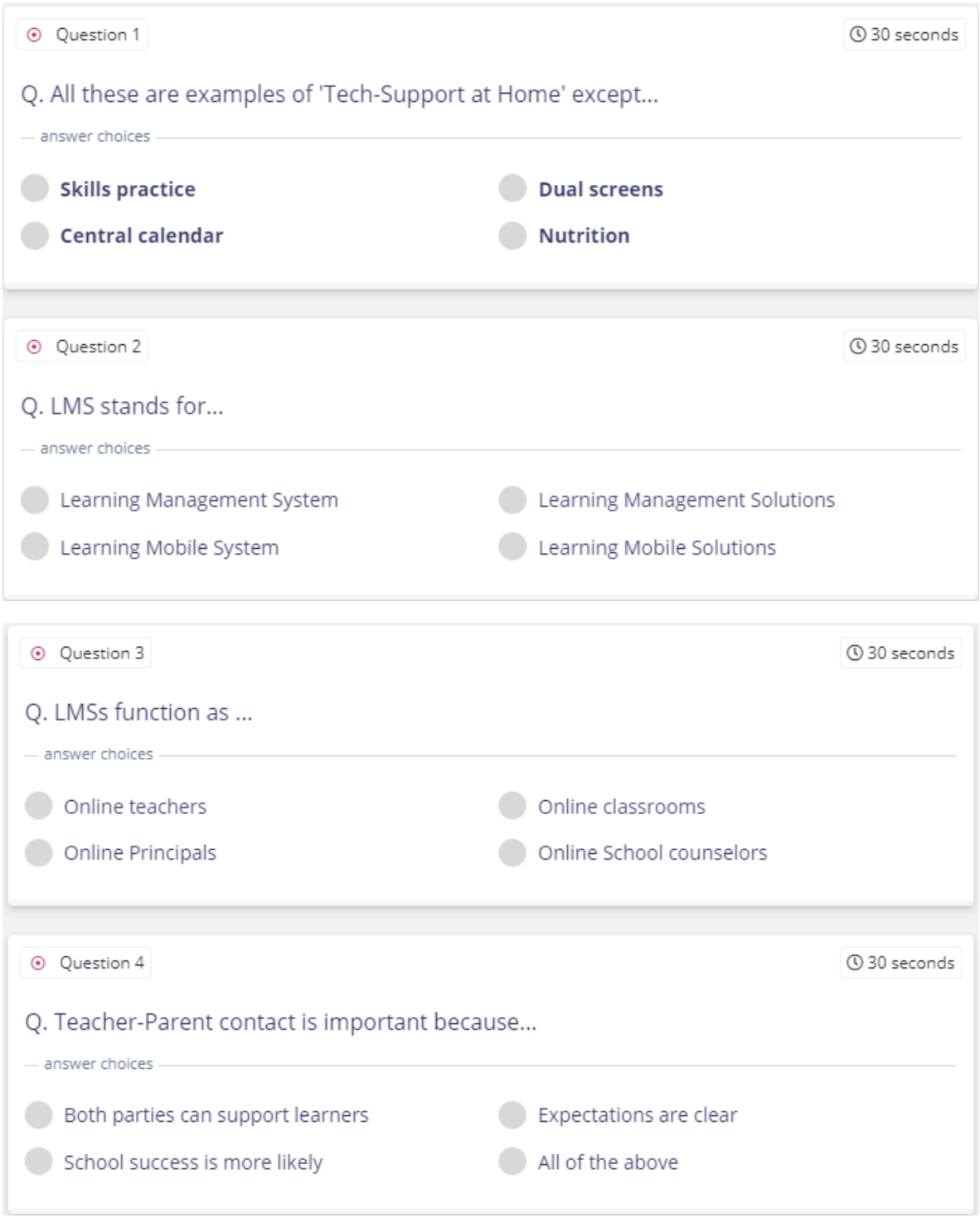
https://quizizz.com/admin/quiz/5fb17030a2dd3f001b038fb7/apoyo-a-los-aprendices-del-idioma-ingl%C3%A9s-durante-el-covid

Slide #12

Preguntas y Respuestas.

Slide #13

Appendix C: Quizizz – English Version



Question 5 — 30 seconds

Q. One example of 'Parent Involvement' is...

answer choices

- Create a school-like area at home
- help your English learner be school-ready
- Limit the digital distraction sources like video games, social media, or television
- Communicate with the school to make sure you and the student are aware of what is expected from scholars during remote learning

Question 6 — 30 seconds

Q. **Remote learning is new for everyone, don't be afraid to ask questions if you need or offer help if you can.**

answer choices

- True
- False

Question 7 — 30 seconds

Q. **'School Readiness' is an example of...**

answer choices

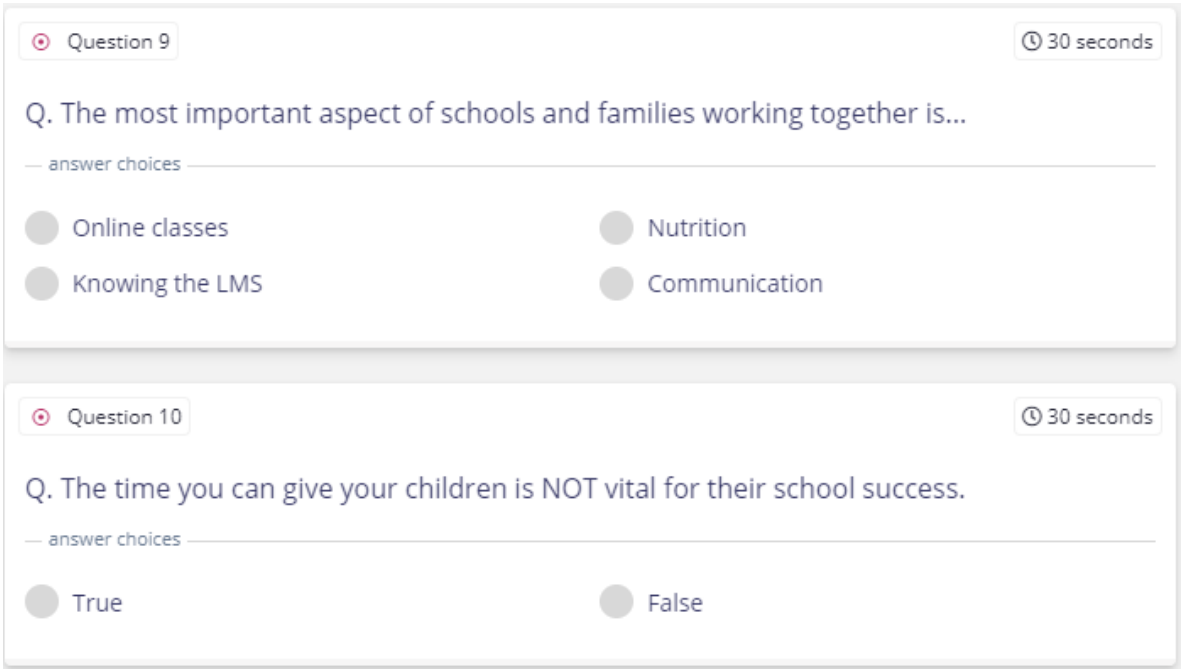
- Creating school culture at home
- Parent Involvement
- Tech-Support
- Make time for your child

Question 8 — 30 seconds

Q. School counselors' roles regading ELLs include...

answer choices

- Providing help and support to improve their academic achievement
- Increase the rate of college-ready students
- All of the above
- None of the above


Question 9
30 seconds
Q. The most important aspect of schools and families working together is...
answer choices
Online classes
Nutrition
Knowing the LMS
Communication
Question 10
30 seconds
Q. The time you can give your children is NOT vital for their school success.
answer choices
True
False

Appendix D: Quizizz – Spanish Version

Question 1 — 30 seconds

Q. Todos estos son ejemplos de 'Soporte Técnico en casa' excepto...

answer choices

- **Práctica de habilidades**
- **Pantallas duales**
- **Calendario central**
- **Nutrición**

Question 2 — 30 seconds

Q. SMA quiere decir...

answer choices

- Sistema de Manejo de Aprendizaje
- Solución de Manejo de Aprendizaje
- Sistema Móvil de Aprendizaje
- Solución Móvil de Aprendizaje

Question 3 — 30 seconds

Q. Los SMAs funcionan como...

answer choices

- Maestros en línes
- Salones de clase en línea
- Principales en línea
- Consejeros escolares en línea

Question 4 — 30 seconds

Q. El contacto entre padres de familia y maestros es importante porque...

answer choices

- Ambos ayudan a los estudiantes
- Las expectativas son claras
- El éxito escolar es más probable
- Todas las anteriores

Question 5 — 30 seconds

Q. Un ejemplo de 'Participación de los Padres' es...

answer choices

- Crear un área semejante al ambiente escolar en casa.
- Ayudar al aprendiz de Inglés a estar listo para la escuela.
- Limitar las distracciones digitales como los video juegos, redes sociales o televisión.
- Comunicarse con la escuela para saber las expectativas hacia los estudiantes.

Question 6 — 30 seconds

Q. **El aprendizaje remoto es nuevo para todos, no tenga miedo de preguntar algo si tiene dudas u ofrecer ayuda si lo puede hacer.**

answer choices

- Verdadero
- Falso

Question 7 — 30 seconds

Q. **'Prepararse para la escuela' es un ejemplo de...**

answer choices

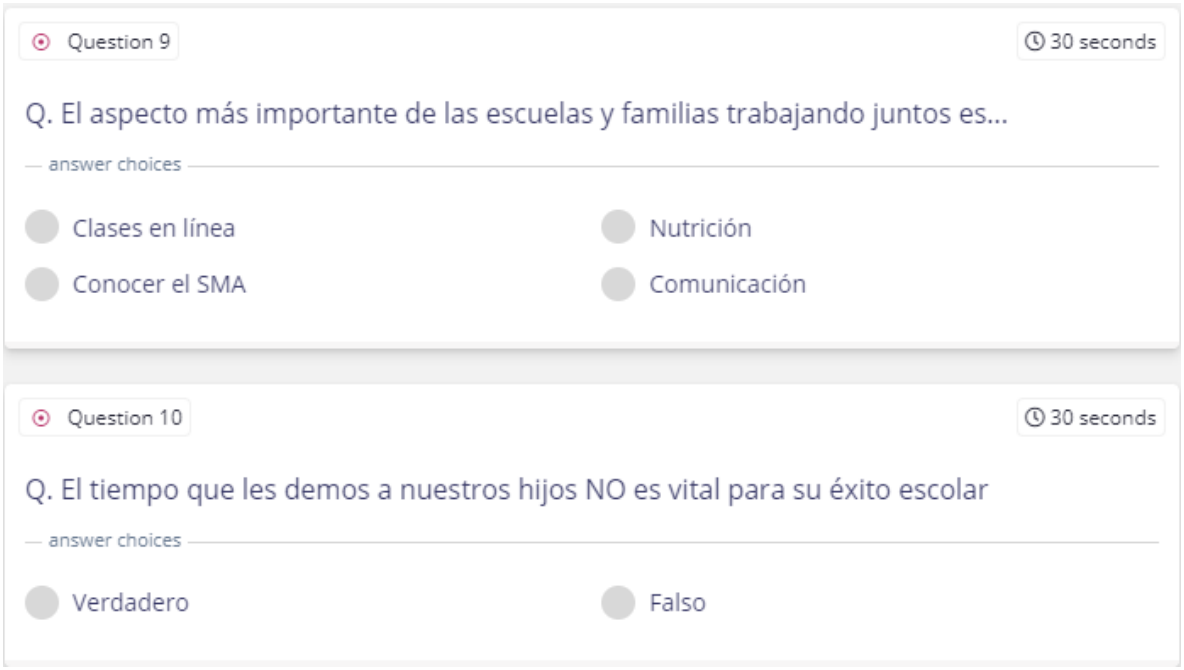
- Crear cultura de la escuela en casa.
- Participación de los padres.
- Soporte Técnico
- Sacar tiempo para sus hijos

Question 8 — 30 seconds

Q. Los roles de los consejeros escolares hacia los aprendices de Inglés incluyen...

answer choices

- Proveer apoyo para mejorar su rendimiento académico
- Incrementar el número de estudiantes listos para ir a la universidad
- Todas las anteriores
- Ninguna de las anteriores


Question 9
30 seconds
Q. El aspecto más importante de las escuelas y familias trabajando juntos es...
answer choices
Clases en línea
Nutrición
Conocer el SMA
Comunicación

Question 10
30 seconds
Q. El tiempo que les demos a nuestros hijos NO es vital para su éxito escolar
answer choices
Verdadero
Falso

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